

# Daily Devotions



**Monday, 10/8/2018**

**James 5:13-20**

Prayer is how we directly communicate with God--individually and communally. I believe we don't so much "wander from the truth" (v. 19) as hide our truth. We aren't bold, brave or courageous enough to share out loud the prayers we really need to say. "The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective," James writes (v. 16). I experienced this week after week at my Milwaukee internship church during the prayers of the people. A microphone was available for anyone to share what was on their hearts and minds. These were some of the most raw and authentic prayers I have ever heard--cries for God to alleviate suffering, songs sung in praise of God's faithfulness, pleas for health and well-being for themselves and others. Nothing was off limits. During these prayers God's righteous children spoke the good, the bad and the ugly out loud to God and to their church family. This was authentic communication. *God of all power and might, thank you for the gift of prayer. May we use this gift to speak to you, and to those with whom we travel this earthly world. Amen.*

René L. Mehlberg, '18, Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Laporte, Minn.

**Tuesday, 10/9/2018**

**Psalm 19:7-14**

*"I ask the church to please pray with me. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer."* This variation on Psalm 19:14 is how I begin my sermons. These words serve as a prayer that my proclamation will be faithful and that those gathered will be open to the word they are about to hear. Today we hear the psalmist's words of instruction and promise. Verses 7-9 remind us of God's instruction for us--instruction for our well-being and the benefits that instruction provides. Verses 10-13 are our promise and prayer back to God. The psalmist's prayer is that the faithful will do all they can to live a life following God's instruction. Yet, we know we will stumble, we will fall, we will need redeeming. So it is our prayer that when we do, we will know that the Lord is right there reviving our soul. *Lord, give us the strength and courage to follow your life-giving instructions. Yet, when we stray and misstep, may we quickly turn back to you, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.*

René L. Mehlberg, '18, Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Laporte, Minn.

**Wednesday, 10/10/2018**

**Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29**

Communication is the theme we will explore this week. Communication includes speaking, hearing, listening and responding. In today's reading we hear in turn the Israelites complaining and weeping, the Lord being angry, Moses letting God have it, and the Lord listening and responding. The Lord responds by asking Moses to gather 70 people to hear the Lord's address and to then prophesy for the Lord. However, two others who were not among those gathered also heard the Lord as "the spirit rested on them." When those two also started prophesying for the Lord, those who were first chosen were not pleased and said as much. Yet, this time Moses spoke on the Lord's behalf, knowing that the Lord's power is more than we can imagine and control. We cannot control who hears the Lord, nor can we control who speaks on behalf of the Lord. As Moses said, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets." *Lord, let your spirit rest on me, that I may hear you clearly and speak faithfully on your behalf. Amen.*

René L. Mehlberg, '18

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Laporte, Minn.

**Thursday, 10/11/2018**

**Mark 9:30-37**

You can find a thousand articles online of people ranking other people from worst to best in different categories. Some will tell you that one person is more attractive than another because they're brainy, physically attractive or kind looking. All these rankings stem from vapid comparisons between human beings, who are all beloved children of God. We all want to think we're better than someone else. I'm certain that it took a good five minutes for the disciples to move again after Jesus told them that the "first must be last"--as they immediately wanted to start competing to be last. The foolishness is not in the categories of comparison, but in the comparison itself. The being last that Jesus talks about is to not be concerned with comparisons. Instead, it is to welcome those who are outside of our own group. When we put aside comparisons and welcome others as beloved children of God, we live into God's call. *Dear God, help us to avoid always wanting to be first or comparing ourselves to others. Help us instead to welcome others as your children and, like us, heirs of your mercy and love. Amen.* Peter Clark, '16, Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Aurora, Ill.

**Friday, 10/12/2018**

**Mark 9:30-37**

In the first part of today's reading we see one of the hallmarks of foolishness. As the disciples travel with Jesus, he says something they don't understand. Rather than seek wisdom from Christ himself, they are afraid to ask. We, too, often don't understand what's going on, and rather than seek wisdom from a mentor, from the person we didn't understand or even from the Bible, we become afraid. We are afraid of looking foolish--and thus we become foolish. We need sources of wisdom in our daily life in order to know whom and what to trust. This is increasingly hard in an increasingly complex and divided society. It's too easy to get caught in an echo chamber in which we hear only ourselves. As the church, we are a place that offers wisdom from Jesus, who declares himself to be "the truth" (John 14:6). Let's do what the disciples were afraid to do, and look to Jesus for God's truth and wisdom. *Dear Lord, guide us in ways of wisdom and help us to not be afraid to ask for help and wisdom when we need it. In Jesus' name. Amen.* Peter Clark, '16, Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Aurora, Ill.

**Saturday, 10/13/2018 & Sunday, 10/14/2018 Mark 9:38-50**

"Teacher! Sam isn't following directions. We tried to tell him, but he won't listen." Such words begin already when we're young. We worry about who isn't listening or who is doing something they shouldn't. We talk to them directly, but if they don't respond, we tell someone else. Often we tell the person who can really do something about it. Sometimes this is helpful; other times it is not. As adults, we need to know why we're saying something. Is it for the other person's protection or our own? John's words to Jesus sound very similar to those of the young man talking to Moses earlier this week. Both are concerned about someone unauthorized doing the Lord's work. Jesus gives a similar answer as Moses: "Let him continue because he is doing my work." We are not the gatekeepers to decide who does the Lord's work; there is enough work for all. *Jesus, help us be fully accepting of all who do your work, as we are all your disciples. May words of thanks and praise flow from our lips to those doing your work in this world. Amen.* René L. Mehlberg, '18, Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Laporte, Minn.